

To new Moms and Dads . . .



*. . . help your baby
get a step ahead in life!*

A Special Message to new MOMS:

Congratulations on the birth of your new baby. Be a proud parent and help your baby get a step ahead in life. You can make a difference. Start today by completing the

Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment form

How will your baby benefit if you sign this *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment form*?

- Your baby's birth certificate will show the names of both parents.
- Your baby will know who both his or her mother and father are.
- Your baby will be entitled to financial support from both parents until he or she becomes an adult.
- Your baby's doctors will be able to learn both parents' family medical histories for such things as cancer, diabetes and sickle cell.
- Your baby may benefit from both parents' health insurance, Social Security, pension, and inheritance.

A Special Message to new DADS:

Congratulations on the birth of your new baby. Be a proud parent and help your baby get a step ahead in life. You can make a difference. Start today by completing the

Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment form

How will your baby benefit if you sign this *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment form*?

- Your name will be on your baby's birth certificate.
- Your baby will know you are his or her father.
- Your baby will be entitled to receive financial support from both parents until he or she becomes an adult.
- Your baby's doctors will be able to learn your family's medical history for such things as cancer, diabetes and sickle cell.
- Your baby may benefit from your health insurance, Social Security, pension, and inheritance.

If this form is filed, you have a greater chance to be a part of your child's life, and your parental rights have to be considered before your baby can be placed for adoption.

Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment - What it means

Before signing the *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment* form, make sure you understand what the form means.

What does it mean if you sign this form?

The *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment* is the easiest way for an unmarried father to put his name on his baby's birth certificate. The other ways involve the courts.

By signing the *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment* form, both parents are establishing their baby's paternity. Paternity means legal fatherhood.

Signing this form legally establishes paternity. This means the court may order support for the baby without having a court hearing to prove who the father is. Support could include paying for medical bills and providing health insurance. Support is paid until the baby becomes an adult. If the baby's father or mother is under age 18, his/her parents may have to pay child support.

This form does **not** give the father legal custody (the legal right to make decisions for the baby) or physical placement (visitation). If the father and mother cannot agree on custody and placement, the father will need to get a court order. Both parents would have to prepare a "Parenting Plan," and then the court would decide what is best for the child. Custody and placement issues can be discussed with your county's or tribe's family court counseling service.

The *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment* form is a legal document. Do not sign this form unless both of you are completely sure that the man signing the form is the biological (real) father. If you are not sure, first ask your child support agency for genetic tests.

You cannot use this form if the mother was married at the time the child was conceived or born unless there is a court order stating that the husband is not the father.

If you have any questions, you should talk to the person who gave you this folder, your local child support agency, a counselor, a caseworker or an attorney before signing this form.

How to fill out the *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment Form*

Complete a separate form for each baby. (For example, if you have twins, you need to fill out one form for each baby.) Use **black ink** and do not cross out or erase anything. If you make a mistake, start a new form.

Section I

Fill in each item in this section.

Write in all names (first, middle, and last names) just as they are on the baby's birth certificate.

Don't forget the father's Social Security number.

Section II

You do not have to change your baby's name. You can just check the **NO** box.

If you **want** to change your baby's name on the birth certificate, check the **YES** box, **and**

- Write in the baby's new name on the form.

Section III

Each parent must sign this form in front of a Notary Public. A Notary is someone licensed by the state to witness signatures.

- Make sure a Notary Public signs and completes the Notary information on both the mother and father areas of this form.
- Each parent may sign the form at different times and in front of different Notaries.
- If you are **under 18 years old**, your parent or legal guardian must also sign this form in front of a Notary Public at the same time that you do.
- You will need to show the Notary some proof of identity.

Notaries can be found in banks, courthouses, and child support agencies. Hospitals also have Notaries. Notaries are also listed in the *Yellow Pages*.

Mail the form to:

Vital Records/VPA

PO Box 309

Madison, WI 53701-0309

Be sure to send a check or money order * for the correct amount to file and receive copies of the updated birth certificate. See the back of the Acknowledgment form for a list of fees. Make out your check or money order to: **Vital Records**. * **Your child support agency may be able to help you with the fee.**

If you change your mind . . .

If you change your mind, you can withdraw the *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment form* if a court has not yet ordered child support.

Either the mother or the father may file a *Request to Withdraw Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment* form. The *Request to Withdraw Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment* form must be filed **within 60 days** of filing the *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment* form **but before** a court orders child support.

If the parent is under 18 when signing the *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment* form and a court has not ordered child support, the parent may file the *Request to Withdraw Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment* form **within 60 days after turning 18**.

The *Request to Withdraw Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment* form is available from the birth hospital, your local child support agency and the state Office of Vital Records.

Check the *Request to Withdraw Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment* form for information about:

- How to fill out the *Request to Withdraw* form
- What the fee is to file the *Request to Withdraw* form
- Where to mail the *Request to Withdraw* form

If you change your mind about using the *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment* form **after 60 days**, you need to ask the court to void the paternity. You might want to hire an attorney. You need to prove that there was fraud, duress or a serious mistake that caused you to sign the *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment* form.